

# Arkansas Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Project



**The Autism and Developmental Disorders Monitoring Network (ADDM Network).** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now funding public health programs in several states, including Arkansas, to develop programs to monitor the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The goal of the ADDM Network is to provide comparable, population-based estimates of the prevalence of autism and related disorders in different states over time. For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddautism.htm>.

**The Arkansas Autism Project** is a system to identify and track the number of children in Arkansas with ASD. This multi year study will help establish a count of the number of Arkansas children with autism. The investigators are members of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). This project is a collaborative undertaking of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, and the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education.

**What part of Arkansas is included in the Arkansas Autism Study?** The entire state of Arkansas is included in this monitoring project. The initial thrust will be in the larger school districts in the state and children seen at the Autism Clinic at UAMS's Department of Pediatrics. Arkansas has about 35,000 births each year.

**What is the age of the children in the study?** This project will initially focus on children eight years of age because other programs have shown that most children with ASD are now identified by age 8.

**How common are ASDs in children who live in Arkansas?** Currently there is no accurate count, but the Arkansas Autism Society works with about 700 children and families within the state. The Arkansas Department of Education has seen an increase in the number of children receiving services who are classified as having autism. In the 2002-2003 school year, 109 8-year-olds (about 3 in 1,000) are being served in the public school system.

**What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASDs?** The project plans to provide in-service training offerings to professionals from the following disciplines: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, education, nursing and pediatrics. Parents and other family members will be included also. The goal of the training is to improve the identification of children with ASD.

**What are some of the other programs in Arkansas that work with children with ASDs and their families?** The Arkansas Autism Society provides information about autism and forms the basis for support groups for the families of children with autism. An Autism Clinic at the Dennis Development Center at UAMS provides diagnostic evaluations for children

**Does the project work with any other monitoring programs in Arkansas?** The Arkansas ADDM Project anticipates working with the Arkansas Reproductive Health Monitoring Program (the registry arm of the Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention, a CDC-funded project in the Department of Pediatrics) and the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, which is working on linking data bases.



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the potential for full, productive living.

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